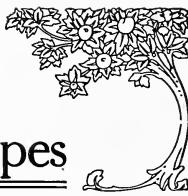


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Instructions



for Growing Cantaloupes

CLIFFORD S. KEMPTON, LONGMEADOW, MASS.

My success in growing cantaloupes I attribute to having devoted much of my time for years to the development of this one special fruit. By careful selection from year to year of the best specimens obtainable, I have succeeded in producing a strain of the Osage type of melon, netting me, on an average, 30 cents each in barrel lots and handled by practically all of the best hotels in New York and throughout New England, specifying them in their menus as the "Longmeadow cantaloup."

I do not mean to convey the idea that planting perfect melon seeds constitutes all that is necessary to obtain perfect melons, but it goes a long way toward it and without good seed it is an impossibility. My methods of culture do not, as a rule, vary greatly from those generally in vogue with melon growers, but there are details in the following courses of treatment, which I have found, if neglected, are but to invite a partial failure more or less of the entire crop.

The Right Start for Hill

After a thorough preparation of the soil, the deeper the better, and rows marked off at right angles, 6 feet apart each way, we hoe out the earth at the intersecting points, making holes about 15 inches in diameter and about 4 inches deep, into which we place a shovelful of well-rotted manure and mix it with the earth, using the hoe for that purpose. This mixing of the manure with soil is considered superfluous in some parts of the country but it gives better results here in New England. We now tread this down, plant about 25 melon seeds, cover with not less than 1 inch of earth and leave the ground as nearly level as possible. If earth is dry pat surface down with hoe.

Our first plantings we make in the open ground in this latitude as early as possible, the time varying from May 10 to 25. To insure the seed germinating and to prevent its rotting in the ground we sprout it before planting. We do this by covering seed with warm water and keeping in a warm spot over night. In morning we mix a little sand with it. Keep the damp mass in a warm place for two or three days till seed sprout, screening out sand with wire mosquito netting before planting.

As soon as the plants appear above ground, they are dusted with air-slaked lime, or lime plaster, to prevent the little striped beetle from devouring the leaves. A little kerosene sprinkled in the plaster the day before using permeates the entire mass and makes it more effective. Should rains wash off this plaster while the plants are yet young, it will be necessary to repeat the operation.

Cut worms are another enemy we have to deal with at this time, especially on turf land and near borders and hedgerows. To prevent their ravages, we mix thoroughly about a pound of paris green with a half barrel of wheat bran—the exact proportions are not important—then stir well into this about a quart of molasses and sufficient water to moisten the whole, so that it will crumble but not be sloppy. We apply this by sprinkling about the plants soon as up, or broadcast over the field before they appear. Should there be objections to the use of paris green, the sweetened bran alone will be beneficial, if kept constantly fresh, the worms preferring such a meal, even to the succulent young plants.

In order to be sure of our fruit coming to maturity and to get an earlier crop we now successfully plant part of our seed during the last week of April in strawberry baskets filled with a rich loam or compost. These baskets are kept in the greenhouse or hotbed until the middle of May, then removed to a cold frame, or somewhere outside, where they can be hardened off and yet protected at night and on cold and rainy days.

Transplanting from Cold Frames

About June 1, or earlier, should the weather promise to be mild enough, we transplant the young melon plants to the open ground. Before doing this, however, we drench the plants with water and then wait for an hour or two until they drain and the earth becomes the right consistency for handling. We now take the baskets to the field and cut two of the top corners, letting the baskets thereby fall apart, enabling us to remove the blocks of earth and plant them in the hills without disturbing the earth about the roots. It is vitally important to do this carefully, for should the roots be much disturbed the plants are sure to wilt and never recover. This explains why clear sand or a sandy loam should never be used to fill baskets in place of compost.

When transplanted this way and no severe weather follows, not one plant in a thousand fails. If but a few melon hills are needed for the garden, little pots or baskets may be kept in any dwelling house in a sunny window.

A very shallow hoeing will soon be necessary in order to keep weeds down, as well as prevent the soil from baking and losing moisture, and repeated after each rainfall, as soon as the earth becomes dry enough to work.

When the plants are strong and have their second leaves well developed, we thin them out, leaving but five to a hill. We use the word hill to distinguish it

IN A CLASS BY THEMSELVES AND THE REASON WHY.

If our sole object was to make money regardless of our reputation, we should grow strawberry plants as others grow them, set them out and let nature do the rest.

The reason we receive so many letters from our customers expressing both surprise and pleasure in receiving from us such fine uniform plants is owing to our method of ceaseless cultivation throughout the growing season and then in the Fall taking up the young plants and pruning, sorting and transplanting them again. This means expense, of course, but one such at planting time in Spring is worth many plants grown in the usual slip-shod manner.

We have hundreds of unsolicited letters on file similar to these.

MONMOUTH NURSERY
LITTLE SILVER, N.J.
Dec. 6, 1920.

Clifford S. Kempton & Co.

Longmeadow, Mass.

Gentlemen:—Enclosed find check in payment of your bill of October 14th. The plants you sent us were extremely fine; we think about the finest of any Ever-Bearing plants we have seen. Please quote us price in lots of 10,000.

Yours very truly,
J. T. LOVETT, Inc.

1 MADISON AVENUE,
NEW YORK.
Dec. 9, 1920.

Clifford S. Kempton & Co.

Longmeadow, Mass.

Gentlemen:—Several years ago you sold me strawberry plants for my home in Brookline and my farm in New Hampshire. They were very satisfactory, etc.

Yours very truly,
(Dr.) A. W. BALCH.

103 TRENTON ST.,
MELROSE, MASS.

Mr. Kempton:

I bought some Ever-Bearing strawberry plants from you last year. They are the finest lot of plants I ever saw and the most productive. The plants can't be beat by anyone.

Yours respectfully,
R. S. Moreland.

AUSTIN FUR FARMING Co.
WEST SUFFIELD, CONN.
O. R. AUSTIN, PRES. Dec. 25, 1920.

Mr. C. S. Kempton:

Dear Sir:—You may book me for early Spring delivery 3000 Lucky-Boy, 2500 Superb and 2500 Progressive. I was more than pleased with plants sent me last Spring and if you can send me some more as good I certainly will appreciate it.

Yours very truly,
A. O. Austin.

BARRINGTON, NOVA SCOTIA,
Aug. 3, 1920.

Mr. Clifford S. Kempton,

Dear Sir:—This Spring I received 500 plants from you which are very satisfactory, and I must say the best I have seen around anywhere, etc.

Very truly yours,
Geo. C. Webb.

104 MERRIMACK ST.
LOWELL, MASS.

C. S. Kempton & Co.,
Longmeadow, Mass.

Dear Sirs:—I got some Ever-Bearing strawberry plants from you last year which were more than satisfactory. We gathered our last picking the 8th of November, and the berries all season were of the finest flavor.

Yours, etc.
Millard F. Wood.

Instructions for Growing STRAWBERRIES

Any well-drained soil that will grow corn or potatoes will grow Strawberries, but the Ever-Bearers, fruiting as they do throughout the season, instead of three weeks in June, should have as rich soil as possible, and land that has been under cultivation for a year or two at least, is preferable. Newly-plowed sod is apt to be infested with June-bug grubs that devour more or less of the strawberry roots.

For horse-cultivation, strawberry-rows should be $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet apart; 2 feet apart is sufficient for gardens. Set plants 12 or 14 inches apart in the rows.

The best method of planting is to make V-shaped holes, 4 or 5 inches deep. Hold bud just above surface with roots straight down, spread out a little fan-shaped and pressed against one side of hole; then fill hole with earth. After setting out each row, tramp earth down on roots with feet on both sides and close to bud. Wet roots just previous to planting and water plants if necessary after planting. No amount of watering can hurt them.

“HEELING IN” (for temporary planting)—Set out plants same as for permanent planting but **have rows only 4 or 5 inches apart; and plants in the rows only 2 inches apart.** One square yard will accommodate 150 plants. Wet thoroughly after setting out and keep plants shaded for a week or so. Be sure and keep ground continually moist.

“Heeling In” has many advantages and is much practised by growers. It is just the thing for those who have not their land ready or when soil is too dry. If kept heeled in for 3 or 4 weeks their roots develop wonderfully so that when transplanted they mature more rapidly than others set out a month earlier and scarcely ever one fails to live. They keep finely heeled in all through the winter, if covered with litter after ground is frozen. It is absolutely necessary that all strawberries to do well should be covered after the ground is frozen hard (*not before*) with coarse manure, straw or other litter about 3 inches deep, to keep earth surface from continual thawing and freezing, thereby heaving plants up out of the soil. Keep ground well cultivated and free from weeds. Pick off all blossoms weekly until about July 20. This is very necessary to strengthen roots and not required the second year. When more plants are wanted either for selling or for increase of beds, all runners should be left on the plants, otherwise it is better to allow not more than 4 or 5 runners from each parent plant to remain and take root. The Ever-Bearers do finely the second year.

FERTILIZERS—Never strew **commercial fertilizer** along the rows where plants are to be set. It will **surely burn the roots.** More plants are destroyed from this cause than all others combined and the growers wrongly blamed for not sending better plants.

The proper time to use commercial fertilizer safely is after plants start to grow. Spread it on then evenly over all the bare ground between the rows and rake or harrow it in. To distribute even and rapidly, the McWhorter Fertilizer Spreader, a little machine, wheeled by hand and costing about seven dollars, is an excellent device for fertilizing all crops. Sprinkling fertilizer directly on the plants is all right if sown lightly and done while raining or washed off directly afterward with hose or sprinkler. Any fertilizer is suitable. The higher grades are the most economical. Ten pounds is sufficient for 100 plants.

 See other side.

Questions and Answers

- 1 *Should the runners of the Ever-Bearers be allowed to take root and form matted rows?*
If more plants are wanted, let them remain, in which case plant in rows 3 feet or more apart, but to get a fine crop of berries keep all runners cut off and have rows only 2 or $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet apart. In either case set plants in the rows about 14 inches apart.
- 2 *When is the best time to set out plants?*
Any time in Autumn before ground is frozen and any time in Spring after the frost is out and the ground settled. Late frosts do the plants no harm. While early Spring planting is generally advocated, we guarantee our transplanted Ever-Bearers, if set out in April, May or even in late June, to bear a full crop the following August, September and October.
- 3 *What fertilizers are best?*
Stable manure, plowed or spaded under—if it is to be had—and commercial fertilizer, spread evenly all over the ground and raked in. Fertilizer alone will often suffice, but in such a case it is well to spread it again between the rows two or three months later, using care not to get it on the plants. Pulverized sheep and stock-yard manure is good and so are hen droppings, but not to supplant the fertilizers. Ground bone or bone meal will do, however. Never strew the fertilizer thickly along the rows where the young plants are going to be set, as it is apt to burn their roots after the first rain. It is not very material what kind or grade of commercial fertilizer is used, but the sort having the biggest percentage of phosphoric acid is best.
- 4 *Must two varieties of strawberries be planted near each other to pollenate the blossoms?*
Pistillate varieties require staminate plants near them. All of our plants, however, are staminate and self-pollinating and do equally well by themselves.
- 5 *Will the different varieties mix if set near together?*
The fruit will not mix, but if young plants are allowed to take root it is well not to have the varieties close enough to run together, or it will be difficult to separate the different kinds if desired.
- 6 *How many plants are required for an acre?*
If cultivation is to be done with horse, runners kept off and rows $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet apart, 14,000 plants are required. If runners are left to take root, rows should be $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet apart and 10,000 plants are enough.
- 7 *How many plants for a plot 20x25 feet?*
Two hundred (10 rows, 25 feet long, 20 in a row).
- 8 *What about raspberries?*
The one all-important thing about raspberries is not to set them out too late, after they are well leaved out and canes hardened. Fall is the ideal time for setting them out. Not one raspberry in a thousand will fail if set out then, even though the ground is frozen. Early Spring is all right, but in our latitude (Massachusetts) it is unwise to set them out usually after first week in May. Raspberry canes should not be more than 6 inches in length when set out to strengthen roots. They should be set 3 feet apart and rows 5 feet apart. Fertilize exactly the same as for strawberries. Our Ever-Bearing raspberries are absolutely hardy and need no Winter protection even in the coldest climates. Early in the second Spring the new canes should be cut down 1-3. They should be cultivated throughout the season and all the little canes that come up a foot or more from the parent stock cut down like weeds.

CLIFFORD S. KEMPTON & CO., Longmeadow, Mass.

from row and do not mean to imply any elevation of the earth. Later, when all danger is past, we thin out again, leaving but three plants, at the same time stirring soil with our hands and removing any weeds found among them.

When 12 to 15 inches high we nip off the ends of the main stems. This pruning throws all the strength into the lateral or side branches that produce the fruit and hastens its maturity. Everything should be done possible to force the quick growth and spreading of the plants. Nitrate of soda, about a teaspoonful to the hill, sprinkled around the hill, but not on the leaves, and frequent shallow cultivation with harrow or rake between the rows, to conserve moisture and aerate the soil, will accomplish wonders. Some good commercial fertilizer spread evenly over the ground between the rows before the last harrowing will also assist greatly in producing large and well-developed fruit.

Should the leaves of any of the plants begin to curl quite perceptibly, melon lice or aphis are sure to be on the underside of leaves. In such cases the only practical way is to immediately cover the entire hill with earth, burying the plants completely out of sight, or the aphis will spread rapidly and destroy the entire crop.

The wilting of some of the vines, usually when the melons are about half grown, is a matter more difficult to cope with. This wilting is caused by the grubs of the striped beetle feeding on the roots of the plant. A strong solution of tobacco poured down by the stems into the roots will check them, but this is seldom resorted to unless the crop appears badly infested.

We always make it a practice to pinch off the ends of all the long and stout lateral branches as the vines become larger and near to covering the ground. This second pruning is done for the same reason as the earlier one, that all the strength and plant food go to the fruit.

Spraying the plants, while not always necessary nor a positive guarantee against all forms of leaf blight, is beneficial in keeping the foliage in a healthy condition. We spray the plants before removing them from the baskets and afterward in the field when they are half grown. We use bordeaux. The early spraying of the vines sometimes prevents June blight, downy mildew and alternaria, but anthracnose, coming later, during the cold nights in the latter part of August, seems impervious to all forms of treatment and comes regularly each season in spite of all our efforts in the way of prevention or cure. We depend, in spite of this indomitable foe, upon the high cultivation, fertilizing and pruning given to gather our crop of well-matured melons before the vines are killed. The spraying is usually done with the barrel spray pump, but a whisk broom will answer, where there are but a few plants growing in the garden.

Treated by the methods as herein described we grow our melon crop with but few culs, the melons being nearly all salable and equally alike in flavor. As a proof of this assertion, all purchasers of my melons were requested, three years ago, to deduct from their bills the amount charged for any melons that did not prove first class in every particular, and among my patrons are such well-known hotels as the Touraine, Young's, Parker House, Brunswick, Copley Square,

Lenox, Essex, United States and Adams House of Boston, and the Manhattan, Holland House, Victoria, Gilsey House, Astor, Waldorf-Astoria and Delmonico of New York ; yet from them until now, during which time I have furnished these hotels with hundreds of barrels of my cantaloupes, in not one single instance has there ever been any deduction made or asked for, except for melons destroyed or delayed in transit by express companies. This I consider my greatest achievement, inasmuch as the bulk of all cantaloupes sold in the markets are at best, but a lottery with the odds strongly against the buyer.

A very important thing, and one that I have never seen done outside of my own grounds, is to go through vines when melons average the size of a cocoanut or thereabouts, and turn each one upside down, that is as large as an orange or larger. When this is not done the lower half is not as thick fleshed as the upper one, is softer and ripens first, is liable to rot and the shell may be penetrated by crickets and wireworms. Turning them over and exposing all parts alike to the sun adds also both to flavor and appearance.

Melons should never be picked until they crack around the stem. They will then part from the vines without pulling, but after hard rains it will be necessary to cut them off with a knife or the stems pull out, leaving holes in the flesh of the melons.

When first gathered, cantaloupes are generally in prime condition for shipment, but should not be cut until soft at the blossom ends. They should be treated like peaches or pears.

I want again to call attention to the importance of not depending upon seed planted out-doors entirely: If you have no small greenhouse or hot bed, start some plants at least in the house by a sunny window about April 20 to May 1. Set the plants in open ground about June 1. They will ripen and be out of the way by the time the others come along.

Melon seeds if kept dry and above the freezing point, are good for many years without losing any of their vitality.

